

Penang Food Guide: Must Eat Food and Where to Find Them

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Mention the word “Penang” to anyone in Singapore, and I’ll bet they would immediately gush about one thing: **the delicious food**. My roommate and I are quite the food enthusiasts, so we were both super excited to make this weekend trip up to Penang from Singapore!

So which dishes can’t you miss while you’re in Penang? Well, I have the perfect list for you. We flew in on a Friday night and flew out on a Sunday, and we made sure we hit up all the must-eats in Penang.



the delicious food I had in Penang

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Tips on visiting Georgetown / Penang

- **Taxis and Car Sharing** – This is the most convenient way to get around in Penang. Just a note, Uber is no longer operating in Malaysia (and in entire South East Asia) as it has been bought out by its local competitor called **Grab**. I have my own opinions about Grab but it does make it much easier when traveling, so I recommend using Grab to get around. It works just like Uber.
- **Public Transport** – An alternative to taxis would be the public bus called Rapid Penang. It's pretty cost-effective way to explore the city. We took it to go to Gurney Drive.
- **Google Maps** works well in Malaysia. So definitely pre-download a map of Penang to save data while you're there!
- As with any other travel, it would also be handy to have an internet connection at all times, so I recommend getting **a prepaid local SIM card**.



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1. Penang Char Koay Teow

Penang Char Koay Teow is a MUST-eat street-side food when in Penang. The dish consists of Koay Teow (white flat rice noodles) stir-fried with chives, eggs, crunchy bean sprouts, and prawns.

You won't run out of options for great Char Koay Teow in Penang. It's clearly such a signature dish that everyone seems to have their own opinion of which Char Koay Teow is the best in the city. Whichever one you choose, make sure it is **cooked on charcoal**. In my opinion, this is the only way to achieve that burnt smoky aroma characteristic of this dish.

dismissive and does not provide any sort of customer service. That said, we didn't run into any problems during our visit so I would still recommend it! The Char Koay Teow itself definitely hits the spot for me. It has that smokey taste that I really craved for. She sells her plate in three sizes: Small for RM9.50, Medium for RM10, and Large for RM 12.50.



Char Kway Teow at Lorong Selamat



1 Hat Auntie at Lorong Selamat

Another place we visited was **Ah Leng Char Koay Teow**, which was also delicious but I felt it was missing the smokey flavor. We ordered the special char koay teow for RM12.50 (The regular plate is RM7.50), and they did give big juicy prawns on each dish which is a huge plus for most people. I don't like crustaceans though, so I gave all of mine to Jess which I'm sure she was super happy about.



Leng Char Kway Teow



ppily tucking in to the Char Koay Teow

Where to eat Penang Char Koay Teow

- Kafe Heng Huat
 - Ah Leng Char Koay Teow
-

2. Penang Asam Laksa

While visiting Singapore and Malaysia, you will start hearing the term “Peranakan” being used in the context of cultural matters.

Peranakan are descendants of Chinese immigrants who had settled in

unique blend now referred to as Peranakan.

One popular example of Peranakan cuisine is Laksa. Now, there are many types of Laksa and Penang is known for the variation called **Asam Laksa**.

We were told that the best Asam Laksa can be found in the **Air Itam area of Penang**, which is not very close to Georgetown. That wasn't going to stop us so we called a taxi and made the 25-minute drive out to Air Itam. Don't let the distance scare you since this Laksa is actually within close proximity of some tourist attractions like Penang Hill and Kek Lok Si temple.

And I have to tell you, *we weren't disappointed*.

"Asam" means sour in Malay, and as you may have guessed by now – the broth for this Laksa is slightly sour from the use of Tamarind and savory from flaked Mackerel. I found the combination of these two flavors is just... out of this world. RM4.00 gives you a small bowl of this goodness. I was tempted to get a second bowl if it wasn't for the long list of food we wanted to try on this trip!

Penang Asam Laksa at Air Itam

Where to eat Penang Asam Laksa

- Air Itam Asam Laksa

3. Penang Tau Sar Piah

Tau Sar Piah is a delicious snack that is very popular in Penang. It is traditionally a type of baked good with various bean fillings, such as red beans or green beans. Penang Tau Sar Piah is usually filled with soft mashed-up mung beans.

l Sar Piah

Where to get Tau Sar Piah in Penang

- Tean Ean Tau Sar Piah
- Him Heang

4. Nasi Lemak

boned eggs, slices of cucumber, fried peanuts, and fried chicken. And don't forget to add a dollop of Sambal chili if you can take it 😊

This dish is usually served for breakfast, though it can be eaten any time of the day now. It's also very popular in Singapore hawker centers!

isi Lemak Cili Bilis at Gurney Drive

» finished Nasi Lemak dish!

Where to eat Nasi Lemak in Penang

- **Nasi Lemak Cili Bilis** at Gurney Drive

5. Kueh Pie Tee and Popiah

Kueh Pie Tee or Koay Pai Ti, is a Peranakan snack popular in Malaysia and Singapore. In Singapore, this is usually only served during festive celebrations and family gatherings. Koay Pai Tee is often served with

small crunchy shell that adds an awesome texture to the snack! I usually pop a whole one into my mouth in one go.

Nobody knows exactly where Koay Pai Ti originated from, but it is thought to be Peranakan food with influence from British culture. And that's why they resemble canapes but with Asian ingredients!

ay Pai Ti at Gurney Drive

Where to get Koay Pai Ti and Popiah in Penang

- Gurney Drive
 - Ong Leng Hin's Chinese Popiah in Padang Brown Hawker
 - Popiah Penang Chowrasta
-

6. Oyster Omelette

Oyster Omelette is yet another dish that became popular in Malaysia and Singapore through Teochew influences. There are many styles of

ster Omelette at Lorong Selamat

Where to get Oyster Omelette in Penang

- Kafe Heng Huat in Lorong Selamat

7. Otak-Otak

although the Otak Otak I am used to is slightly different than the ones found in Malaysia and Singapore. In Singapore, this is also referred to as “Otah”.

ak Otak at Lorong Selamat

Where to get Otak Otak in Penang

- Kafe Heng Huat in Lorong Selamat

Wantan Mee is not a dish unique to Penang or even Malaysia, but I'll bet it's a comforting and familiar meal to anyone who has lived in Asia. It is a simple noodle dish that can be ordered in soup or dry, which means the noodles will come slathered in extra dark sauce and a separate bowl of soup.

We ordered both to see what the differences are, and the conclusion is that the dry version is definitely tastier. However, the soup version is probably more healthy since the extra sauce in the dry version seems to be very decadent.

- Ah Hock Wantan Mee
 - Maria's Sui Kow Wan Tan Mee
-

9. Hokkien Prawn Mee

On our first night in Penang, we called up an Uber to get to Georgetown from the Airport (Note that Uber is no longer operating in South East Asia – you can try the local version called Grab instead). Lucky for us, our driver is a very kind and friendly one! Upon finding out that we were hungry and excited to explore Penang food, he offered to go out of his way and take us to his favorite food joint at **Lebuh Presgrave**. He also sat down with us for the meal.

The Hokkien Prawn Mee was delicious. We also ordered an array of desserts to finish off the meal, such as **Ice Kachang** (red bean shaved ice) and **Chendol** (a dessert made of Gula Melaka / palm sugar and coconut milk).

A perfect welcome meal for us 😊 Thanks, Melv!

kkien Prawn Mee at Lebuh Presgrave

Where to stay in Penang

In Penang, you'd want to stay in **Georgetown**.

Here are my recommendations for accommodations in Georgetown:

- We stayed at **Royale Chulan Penang**, which was a great find since it's within walking distance of the famous Penang Street Art and most of the tourist locations in Penang. And for a 4-star hotel, it was really affordable! **[Book Royale Chulan Penang](#)**

very good night in the middle of all the actions in Georgetown.

Book Carnayron House

And That's all Folks! ... For now. Food, while a huge part of Penang, was not the only thing it had to offer. I will write about what to do in Penang in 48 hours in the future. Until next time 😊